

HONORING THE GRADUATES OF  
THE 90TH PRECINCT**HON. NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 10, 1999*

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I ask you and my colleagues to join me in congratulating special graduates of the 12th Congressional District of New York. I am certain that this day marks the culmination of much effort and hard work which has led and will lead them to continued success. In these times of uncertainty, limited resources, and random violence in our communities and schools, it is encouraging to know that they have overcome these obstacles and succeeded.

These students have learned that education is priceless. They understand that education is the tool to new opportunities and greater endeavors. Their success is not only a tribute to their strength but also to the support they have received from their parents and loved ones.

In closing, I encourage all my colleagues to support the education of the youth of America. With a solid education, today's youth will be tomorrow's leaders. And as we approach the new millennium, it is our responsibility to pave the road for this great Nation's future. Members of the U.S. House of Representatives, I ask you to join me in congratulating the following Academic Achievement Award Recipients:

Christian Nitti and Joshua Romero—PS 16.  
Massiel Santana and Josette Dueno—PS 18.

Pearl Ramos and Andrew Vasquez—PS 19.  
David Rodriguez and Cindy Escoboza—PS 84.

Lasnette O'Garro and Jose Lozada—PS 147.  
Steven Rodriguez and Janyra Quinones—PS 196.

Giselle Burgos and Christina Santiago—PS 250.

Kimberly Gonzalez and David Quinga—PS 257.

Michelle Rivera and Ior Kretowicz—Most Holy Trinity R.C.

Jennifer Pascual and Nicole Medici—St. Nicholas R.C.

Marcus Copeland and Ann Liriano—PS 380.  
Kaity Cheng and Yu Chen—I.S. 318.

Sabrina Ramphal and Yamil Tavaréz—I.S. 49.

Fances Dover and Wendy Morel—J.H.S. 50.  
Abner Rodriguez and Monica Aldana—I.S. 71.

Nella Bastien and Raquel Aponte—H.S. Enterprise Business & Tech.

Essanai Velasquez and Luis Ramos—El Puente Academy/Peace & Justice.

Keith Madden and Zorielle Rodriguez—Transfiguration R.C. School.

Desirae Nazario and Joann Danio—Saint Peter & Paul R.C.

Jennifer Chavez and Gabriella Padilla—All Saints R.C.

## WAGING THE DRUG WAR

**HON. RANDY "DUKE" CUNNINGHAM**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 10, 1999*

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, last week a Narcotics Eradication Task Force from the

Republic of Colombia visited Washington. The Task Force included three retired Colombian Generals, a former Minister of Defense, the ex-Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, the Army's former Inspector General, journalists, academics and a Magistrate from the International War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague. They came to Washington at the request of the bipartisan National Security Caucus with an important and powerful message for all of us.

I hope all of my colleagues will pay careful attention to the alarming statistics they provided:

Eighty percent of the world supply of cocaine is produced or transits through Colombia, and over 75 percent of the heroin seized on the U.S. East Coast is from that nation.

Over 20,000 Americans die every year from abusing illegal narcotics. Drug abuse is also the main reason America's prison population has doubled between 1988 and 1998 and our nation has to spend over \$35 billion on its correctional system.

There has been a 27 percent increase in drug use among 12–17 year olds, and 78 percent of American students report that drugs are bought, sold or used in their high schools.

According to the most recent reports issued by the Clinton Administration, there has been an incredible 378 percent annual increase in the use of pure Colombian heroin. Heroin use has become an epidemic in almost every town, big or small, in our country. It is cheaper, purer and easier to obtain than ever before.

A recent report released by the Colombian Army demonstrates that the FARC rebels have earned more than \$5.3 billion over the last eight years through drug trafficking, kidnapping and extortion.

Colombia has one of the highest rates of murder and kidnapping in the world. Attacks by rebel forces displaced over 300,000 people last year and 95 percent of all crimes go unpunished. The number of outstanding arrest warrants is over 150,000 and the judiciary has a backlog of over 3.5 million cases.

Mr. Speaker, I believe we can win the war on drugs but it will take a real commitment. We cannot just wish it away, and education alone is not going to stop drugs. Furthermore, interdiction alone will not stop the drug lords.

Almost every American family has been affected negatively by drugs, including my own, not only from usage but from the sale of drugs. I want to tell you how disappointing, how hurtful it is and how damaging it is to a family. The Narcotics Eradication Task Force from Colombia expressed sincere gratitude for the economic assistance of the United States, but they also demonstrated that we need a real and comprehensive war on drugs.

The Task Force members reminded us that many brave Colombian soldiers, policemen, judges and statesmen have lost their lives in the War on Drugs. They reminded our colleagues of heroes such as Enrique Camerino, a Border Patrol agent from just east of my district. He was buried alive after being tortured by Mexican drug loads.

The Narcotics Eradication Task Force met with Senator Jeff Sessions (R-AL) and our colleagues Cass Ballenger (R-NC); Ciro Rodriguez (D-TX), Joe Crowley (D-NY),

Kevin Brady (R-TX), Cliff Stearns (R-FL) and Mark Sanford (R-SC). According to the Task Force, the Colombian cartels processed coca paste flown from Peru and Bolivia for over a decade.

It was not until the 1990s that the cartels promoted the planting of coca in the remote and sparsely populated eastern plains and jungles of Colombia, where the guerrillas had strong influence. Initially the guerrillas were content to protect laboratories and "tax" the different phases of the production process. They have since moved into direct involvement in the whole production process. They provide a good share of the cocaine produced in Colombia and collect protection money for the rest. The same holds true for the more recent production of heroine.

However, as their income from drugs increased the guerrillas' kidnaping activity did not diminish. Around 1,600 people were reported kidnaped in 1997 and over 2000 were abducted in 1998. The true figure is unknown but probably much higher, since families are routinely ordered not to inform the authorities and many heed this warning. Guerrillas are believed to be responsible for 60% of the kidnapping in Colombia and collect more than 200 million dollars annually from these activities.

The Colombian guerrillas are thought to be the world's richest and most powerful criminal organization. But guerrillas combatants do not operate in a vacuum. Although the various legal Marxist parties have had little success at the polls, their unarmed supporters have infiltrated many government organizations. They also have permanent representatives abroad that run, with the collaboration of the extreme left in the United States and Europe, a powerful propaganda and disinformation operation.

The visit of the Narcotics Eradication Task Force was made possible by the Colombian non-profit organization, Forum Interamericano. The Task Force also expressed its concern over the excessive concessions made by President Pastrana to the FARC rebels in a well intentioned but badly planned peace initiative. As an inducement to the FARC to sit at a negotiating table Pastrana ordered the withdrawal of the Armed Forces from a coca producing region the size of Switzerland, 16,000 square miles. This has given the terrorist guerrillas a safe sanctuary where the rebel group is recruiting combatants, keeping kidnap victims and has continued to produce drugs.

HONORING MT. MORIAH CHRISTIAN  
CHURCH**HON. JOHN SHIMKUS**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 10, 1999*

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this time to applaud the efforts of the Mt. Moriah Christian Church in Centralia, Illinois for their strength and dedication in rebuilding after vandals set a fire that destroyed the church in August of 1997.

Mount Moriah believed to be the first church in Marion County was built in 1829. The May

16 rededication ceremony with county historian George Ross as the guest speaker told of the great history behind this community asset.

Credit should go to the dedicated members, Dale Nollman, and Carpenter's for Christ for their assistance in the rebuilding process. They not only restored the church, but also brought the building up to standards including making it wheelchair accessible.

I am truly pleased to see that the Mt. Moriah Christian Church's efforts will keep this part of community history living with new chapters to come well in to the future.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

##### HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKEY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 10, 1999

Mr. VISCLOSKEY. Mr. Speaker, due to a commitment to my family on Wednesday, June 9, 1999, I was unable to cast my floor vote on rollcall Nos. 182-184.

#### COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT ACT

##### HON. PATRICK J. KENNEDY

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 10, 1999

Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address an issue of great importance to me and to many members of the community I represent. Fair and equal access to capital and credit should be a fundamental right, yet for too long it has been a privilege based on race or economic class. The dream of owning your own home or business slips away when financial institutions discriminate against hardworking, creditworthy Americans.

Fortunately, blatant discrimination in the lending industry is in decline, home ownership and small business opportunities are on the rise and we can attribute much of this progress to the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA). CRA rates federal banking agencies on how they meet the credit and capital needs of all the communities in which they are chartered and from which they take deposits. Community organizations, elected and religious leaders, and ordinary citizens have a right to offer their opinions regarding the CRA performance of lenders during CRA exams or mergers of CRA. Additionally, CRA has leveraged a tremendous amount of reinvestment for our nation's inner cities and rural areas. For example, in 1997, low- and moderate-income borrowers received 28 percent of the nation's mortgage loans—up dramatically from 18 percent in 1990. According to the National Community Reinvestment Coalition, banks have made over \$1 trillion in commitments to CRA-related loans and investments since the law was passed in 1977. In Rhode Island, CRA has revitalized cities throughout the state. From Constitution Hill in Woonsocket to the West End of Providence to Newport, community based housing and economic development activities are taking place because of CRA.

As we here in the Congress consider financial modernization and H.R. 10, I will strenuously oppose any effort to weaken CRA. In addition, we must strengthen our nation's reinvestment and fair lending laws through reopening requirements on policyholders. We should ensure that CRA will leverage new business opportunities by helping insurance companies, community organizations, and local public agencies identify missed market opportunities in traditionally underserved neighborhoods.

I urge my colleagues to stand firm in support of CRA during the debate on H.R. 10. Supporting the measurable progress we have made in expanding economic opportunities for all segments of our society is the right thing to do.

RHODE ISLAND COMMUNITY

REINVESTMENT ASSOCIATION,

Providence, RI, May 24, 1999.

Hon. ROBERT WEYGAND,  
House of Representatives,  
Washington, DC.

Hon. PATRICK KENNEDY,  
House of Representatives,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN WEYGAND AND CONGRESSMAN KENNEDY: The RI Community Reinvestment Association (RICRA) is a thirteen-year-old organization working to encourage the public and private reinvestment in the housing and community economic development of low and moderate neighborhoods in the state. RICRA provides foreclosure prevention advocacy for individual homeowners.

The future of CRA is at risk. Given the importance of the Fleet proposed acquisition of BankBoston with 50 bank branches to be sold. One example, the City of Pawtucket has on the table all Fleet and BankBoston branches to be sold. CRA is revitalizing our cities in Rhode Island. From Constitution Hill in Woonsocket to the West End of Providence to Newport and South County, community-based housing and economic development activities are taking place because of CRA. CRA must be preserved. Financial Modernization should benefit all segments of our communities and individual households. Financial Modernization should not be just for depositors with daily balances in the six-figures income. Financial Modernization must include community reinvestment.

RICRA is requesting that as our Congressional Delegation in the House of Representatives that you join the procession for a one-minute statement on CRA. We've enclosed the text for your consideration. If you agree to do a one-minute speech, please work with Rep. LaFalce's staff (Tricia Haisten 202-225-4247).

Thanking you in advance for your consideration of working to save CRA.

Sincerely,

RAY NEIRINCKX,  
Coordinator.

#### EXCHANGE PRIVILEGES FOR 30% DISABLED VETERANS

##### HON. ROBERT E. ANDREWS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 10, 1999

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support allowing veterans with a service-con-

nected disability of 30% or more to use military exchanges. I am pleased that the House Armed Service Committee approved report language urging the Pentagon, in coordination with the Veterans Administration, to study the feasibility of providing exchange privileges to veterans with a disability of 30% or more. I want to reiterate my support for this policy, and I hope that the Pentagon will favorably report back the results of their study to the Armed Services Committees in both the House and Senate before the end of this year.

Today, as many as one million disabled and deserving veterans are unjustly denied the ability to patronize military exchanges. Exchange privileges are granted to veterans who incur a serious disability while in service that warrants medical retirement, but veterans whose disabilities increase after separation from military service are denied this privilege.

I support extending exchange privileges to disabled veterans whose service-related injuries exacerbate over time. Many veterans who incurred service-connected injuries that did not appear initially to be serious enough to warrant medical retirement, but these injuries often have a delayed effect and develop later in life into more severe disabilities that significantly impair their health.

The Department of Defense can afford to give exchange privileges to veterans with service-connected injuries which have led to a disability of 30% or more. I do not believe that allowing these deserving veterans exchange privileges will greatly burden exchange operations or the appropriated funds budget. Already, employees of the military exchange systems, who have never served a day in uniform, enjoy exchange shopping privileges. Disabled veterans deserve no less.

We should grant exchange privileges to this group of patriots because it is the right, fair and honorable thing to do. I am pleased that the bill we are considering today urges the Pentagon to correct this injustice.

#### RECOGNIZING WCXO IN CLINTON COUNTY, ILLINOIS

##### HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 10, 1999

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this time to congratulate WCXO in Clinton County which will begin broadcasting in mid-June from a state-of-the-art FM facility.

This station will not only provide music entertainment: it will also give a valuable resource to local residents by its commitment to the community through its broadcasting of boys' and girls' high school sporting events, local and headline news reports, and farm reports.

Owned by Joy Publishing, the station will be headed by General Manager Annette Bevel. Under her guidance and their dedicated staff composed mostly of Clinton County's own, I am confident that the station will be a great asset to Clinton County.

I applaud these efforts to improve communication, entertainment, and information within Clinton County and wish them well.